

Discover!

Social Studies

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Lesson 14

Kingdoms and Rulers of Ancient Egypt

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- describe the three kingdoms of ancient Egypt
- identify some important rulers of ancient Egypt and their contributions
- describe the social pyramid of ancient Egypt

Lesson Review

If you need to review the religious practices of ancient Egypt, please go to the lesson titled “Religious Practices of Ancient Egypt.”

Academic Vocabulary

Read the following vocabulary words and definitions. Look through the lesson. Can you find each vocabulary word? Underline the vocabulary word in your lesson. Write the page number of where you found each word in the blanks.

- **dynasty:** members of the same family who rule as king or queen (page ____)
- **nomarch:** a governor of a region of ancient Egypt (page ____)
- **reign:** a period of time that a king or queen rules (page ____)

IN THE REAL WORLD

This monument was built for one of the great pharaohs of ancient Egypt, Thutmose III. Thutmose III became pharaoh at the age of two! Have you ever seen a historical monument? Can you think of an example of one that you know exists? Who is it for, and why was it built? Discuss these questions with your instructor.



The Three Kingdoms

The history of the Egyptian empire is long and involved, but it can be broken down into three different time periods: the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms.

The Old Kingdom began under Pharaoh Narmer. The Egyptian civilization grew and became strong. They began to build the pyramids and developed hieroglyphics during this time. The pharaoh used governors, called **nomarchs**, to govern the different regions of his expanding empire. These people made sure that the pharaoh's orders were obeyed. The Old Kingdom came to an end when some of the nomarchs began to disobey Pharaoh Pepi II and took more power for themselves. This caused Egypt to split apart.

By 2000 BC, the Middle Kingdom period had begun, and the pharaohs had regained control of Egypt. Egypt began to get stronger and wealthier by trading with other countries. They mined copper and tin in the Sinai Peninsula and traded those goods with the people of Mesopotamia. The Middle Kingdom ended around 1800 BC when invaders took over Egypt.

Egyptians were able to regain power once more by overthrowing their invaders to establish the New Kingdom. To ensure that Egypt would not be invaded again, the Egyptians strengthened their military by using horses and chariots in battle. Egypt expanded its empire to its biggest size around 1450 BC, extending down into Sudan and up to Syria. The New Kingdom lasted until about 1050 BC. By this time, the Egyptian Empire had weakened due to droughts, civil war, and invasions until it eventually came to an end.

PRACTICE

Create a timeline showing the time periods of the three kingdoms and explain something that happened during each of these periods.



Rulers of Ancient Egypt

There were many great pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

Narmer became the first pharaoh of Egypt. Narmer also started the first **dynasty**, meaning that only members of his family would rule the kingdom. In all, ancient Egypt was ruled by more than 30 different dynasties. During Narmer's **reign**, or the period of time that he ruled, the Egyptians began to build pyramids and develop hieroglyphic writing.

One of the strongest and most successful pharaohs of ancient Egypt was not a man but a woman named Hatshepsut. Hatshepsut reigned along with her son, Thutmose III, during the New Kingdom. They conquered other lands and built an Egyptian empire. Thutmose III was a warrior king who was victorious all 17 times he went to war!



Queen Hatshepsut

Other pharaohs during the New Kingdom also made lasting changes. Rameses II moved the capital of Egypt to the north where it was easier for his army to launch attacks on other cities and peoples. He was also known to be a great conqueror and builder.



Temple of Rameses II

ONLINE CONNECTION

With the help of your instructor, search for a video that gives additional information about the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. Which pharaoh was most interesting to you? What was that pharaoh known for? Write your findings on the lines below.

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WRITE

What were Narmer's contributions to the society of ancient Egypt?

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The Social Pyramid

Not everyone could be a pharaoh. The rest of the Egyptians were divided into different groups. The social structure of ancient Egypt looked like a pyramid, with the majority of the people on the bottom and a much smaller number of people at the top.

As the largest group and the lowest row of the social pyramid, the slaves, servants, and peasants were farmers and laborers who worked on the building projects of the pharaoh. Unfortunately, there was little opportunity for upward movement in the social pyramid of ancient Egypt.



REVIEW

In this lesson, you learned:

- The three kingdoms of ancient Egypt were the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom.
- Three of the most important rulers of ancient Egypt were King Narmer, who built pyramids and developed hieroglyphics; Hatshepsut, who reigned with her son and expanded the empire; and Ramesses II, who moved the capital and was known as a great builder and conqueror.
- The social structure of ancient Egypt was organized like a pyramid with pharaohs at the top, followed by government officials and priests, scribes, artisans, and slaves, servants, and peasants on the bottom.
- There was little room for upward movement in the social pyramid.

Think About It

Which ruler do you think made the greatest impact on ancient Egypt?

WRITE

Describe the social pyramid of ancient Egyptians.

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1. Number the three kingdoms of ancient Egypt in the correct order from 1 (first) to 3 (last).

- _____ Middle Kingdom
- _____ New Kingdom
- _____ Old Kingdom

Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

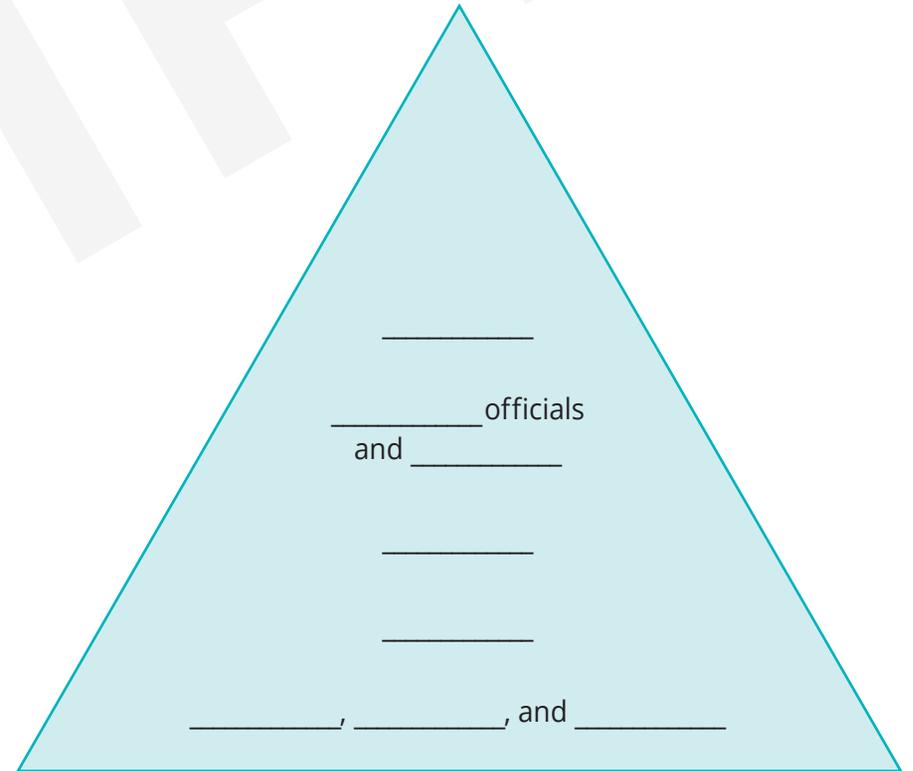
2. During the _____ Kingdom, Egypt became an empire and grew to its largest size to date.
3. During the _____ Kingdom, Egyptians began mining and trading with other groups of people.
4. _____, _____, and _____ made up the base of the social pyramid in ancient Egypt.
5. Recorders of government and religious information were called _____.
6. Under the reign of _____, the capital of Egypt was moved north.
7. _____ was remembered as a warrior who ruled alongside his mother.

CREATE 

On a separate piece of paper, create a cartoon that shows the success of one of the great pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

8. Fill in the rows of the social pyramid using the Word Bank below.

Word Bank: government slaves servants artisans scribes priests pharaohs peasants



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